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ABSTRACT

This report presents findings from a Cairo conference on vocational education and training (VET) standards. It focuses on four European Training Foundation documents. Chapter 1 introduces an international model for development of standards and explains how to identify employment requirements based on labor market analysis and a questionnaire (and its analysis) on the current status of VET standards development in the Mashreq (Eastern Mediterranean) region. Chapter 2 provides a summary of questionnaire results that present current practice in VET and standards in the region. Chapter 3 groups conference themes under these three topics: developing and implementing VET standards; involving stakeholders; and linking VET standards to the labor market. Chapter 4 provides a summary of national case studies from Mashreq countries. Chapter 5 presents results from working groups discussions on weaknesses in VET standards development; key themes related to the increasing relevance of VET to labor market needs; and scope for developing regional cooperation. Chapter 6 reports on national discussion group opinions on opportunities the conference offered; barriers in their country; national-level steps to overcome them; and regional cooperation. Chapter 7 identifies the conference's key themes, which are the following: moving toward competence-based VET systems; labor market analysis; involving stakeholders; relevance; financing; teacher training; and regional cooperation. The program and participant list are annexed. (YLB)

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Innovative Practices in Vocational Education and Training Standards in the Mashreq Region

European Training Foundation

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION 7

1.1 Why a conference on vocational education and training standards? 7

1.2 How did we get to the conference? 7

1.3 The conference: objectives and overview of the programme 8

2. CURRENT PRACTICE IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND STANDARDS IN THE MASHREQ REGION 11

2.1 General characteristics of vocational education and training systems 11

2.1.1 Vocational education and training and socio-economic development 11

2.1.2 Weaknesses of vocational education and training systems 11

2.1.3 Responding to labour market needs 11

2.1.4 Innovative practice 12

2.2 Implementation and delivery of vocational education and training 12

2.2.1 Delivery 12

2.2.2 Assessment 13

2.3 Vocational education and training standards 13

2.3.1 Development of standards 13

2.3.2 Content of vocational education and training standards 14

3. CONFERENCE THEMES 17

3.1 Developing and implementing vocational education and training standards 17

3.1.1 International consensus 17

3.1.2 Content consensus 18

3.1.3 The changing role of teachers 18

3.1.4 Quality assessment 19

3.2 Involving stakeholders....19

3.2.1 Stakeholders and their reasons to be involved....19

3.2.2 The value of the employment specification....21

3.2.3 Balancing the learning specification....21

3.2.4 Involving stakeholders....22

3.2.5 Components....22

3.2.6 The role of sectoral stakeholders....22

3.3 Linking vocational education and training standards to the labour market....24

3.3.1 Labour market information systems....24

3.3.2 International and national economic trends....24

3.3.3 National enterprise employment data....25

3.3.4 Sector surveys....25

3.3.5 Census, social security, and household survey data....25

3.3.6 Medium-term employment forecasts....26

3.3.7 Employment service 'Job Bank' data....26

3.3.8 Advisory committees....26

3.3.9 Occupational employment surveys and long-term forecasting....27

3.3.10 Linking vocational education and training standards to the labour market - the example of Ireland....27

4. NATIONAL CASE STUDIES FROM MASHREQ COUNTRIES....29

5. WORKING GROUP RESULTS: THE REGIONAL DIMENSION....31

5.1 Weaknesses....31

5.2 Key themes....32

5.3 Regional co-operation....33

5.4 Common understanding....33

6. RESULTS FROM THE NATIONAL DISCUSSION GROUPS 35

6.1 Opportunities 35

6.2 Barriers 35

6.3 Steps to be taken 36

6.4 Regional co-operation 36

7. SUMMARY OF MAIN CONCLUSIONS 37

7.1 Towards competence-based vocational education and training systems 37

7.2 Labour market analysis 37

7.3 Involving stakeholders 37

7.4 Relevance 38

7.5 Financing 38

7.6 Teacher training 38

7.7 Regional co-operation 39

ANNEXES 41

ANNEX 1 - CONFERENCE PROGRAMME 43

ANNEX 2 - LIST OF PARTICIPANTS 47

ANNEX 3 - LIST OF INTERVENTIONS 51

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Why a conference on vocational education and training standards?

Benchmarking training results against professional requirements, vocational education and training standards are *the* tools to ensure relevance, transparency and quality of the outcomes of the education and training process. Their international comparability has become increasingly important in the context of globalisation, the resulting openness of economies, and the surge in international competition and mobility of labour.

In the past, vocational education and training standards were often based on vocational curricula - the specification of what was taught in the vocational schools. This has changed. Education developments can no longer match the speed with which labour market demands evolve. In fact the speed of developments is now so high and the labour market itself such a volatile place that the process of monitoring and defining its needs has become a difficult activity, requiring careful analysis of a complex set of indicators by skilled professionals.

This is not a reason to give up on education and training standards - quite the contrary. It does, however, have important consequences for the interaction between the education and training sectors and actors in the labour market. This interaction now needs to be intensive and on-going. A rapidly changing environment demands quick and continuous adaptation of education and training standards and core skills. Among the latter, learning to learn - to prepare for lifelong learning - is earning itself a deserved and overdue place in curricula throughout the industrialised world.

Teachers also need to be prepared for their new roles, and to act less as communicators of narrowly defined occupational skills. They need to learn and adapt constantly, acting as guides or even counsellors with an understanding of volatility of the labour market.

Vocational education and training standards help to create a clearer link between the world of education and labour; they translate the labour requirements into training or learning requirements for the benefit of all stakeholders - authorities, employers, social partners and the individuals they represent.

1.2 How did we get to the conference?

The European Training Foundation, an agency of the European Union, is a centre of expertise on vocational education and training development. As standards are arguably the most essential building blocks of modern vocational education and training systems, considerable research has been carried out and supported by the Foundation in the fields of vocational education and training standards and labour market research.

Over the past few years, the Foundation has published four documents on the topic. They are aimed at those who have a stake in the development of standards. The fourth of these documents introduces an international model for the development of standards and explains in detail how to identify the employment requirements on the basis of functional labour market analysis. The documents, together with a detailed questionnaire (and subsequent

analysis) on the current status of vocational education and training standards development in the Mashreq[1] region formed the backdrop against which the conference in Cairo took place.

It is important to stress that the questionnaire focused on quality rather than quantity. In other words, the aim was to map what was happening where - not how much of it was happening or how widespread it was. Analysis of the questionnaire identified the key themes of the conference and best practice in the different countries of the region. The latter was reflected in the national case studies that were presented during the conference. The section below summarises the conference programme and gives an overview of the main themes and the methodologies used for discussion.

1.3 The conference: objectives and overview of the programme

The conference aimed at:

- exchanging experiences between the countries in the region and EU Member States on current practice in vocational education and training standards development;
- the establishment of a common understanding on what vocational education and training standards are, their minimum characteristics and requirements, and their role as a tool for controlling quality and increasing transparency, as well as;
- strengthening policy development in the countries concerned.

The questionnaire and its subsequent analysis singled out **two main themes** as common priorities for the countries concerned:

1. A methodology for vocational education and training standards development:. How are vocational education and training standards developed. What are the key components of a standard? Who should be involved in its design and implementation?

2. *The employment-education link:* How can labour market information be analysed? How can future trends be identified? How can socio-economic issues be brought into labour market analysis? More importantly, how can the information compiled and analysed be fed back into the education and training planning cycle?

The first part of the conference, was dedicated to the presentation of the two themes above. The methodology used was plenary presentations followed by round tables, in which partner countries and EU Member States could present their experiences and examples of best practice. As it is widely accepted that there is not one single solution to any of the given problems, the aim was to present relevant views rather than to try and 'sell' different models. Emphasis was placed on how particular difficulties were overcome in different countries.

The second day was used for working group discussions that allowed participants to go deeper into the different issues raised in plenary and, more importantly, allowed discussion on the possibilities for a regional dimension to vocational education and training standard development. The results are reported in Chapter 5.

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[1] Eastern Mediterranean - Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, the Palestinian National Authority and Syria.

The last day of the conference was dedicated to moving towards a common understanding. Each country delegation was offered the opportunity to retreat for a short time to reflect on the conference in terms of how useful and relevant it had been from their national perspective and to think on what possible next steps could be taken back at home for the development or improvement of the standards. These groups were kept fairly informal. This set-up worked well. The results for each country are reported in Chapter 6.

The interactive nature of the conference and the opportunities created for everybody to take an active role in it gave a sense of ownership to the partner countries that was reflected both in the good atmosphere and in its rich results.

2. CURRENT PRACTICE IN VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING AND STANDARDS IN THE MASHREQ REGION

As mentioned above, the main issues for the conference in Cairo were drawn from the feedback to the research questionnaire. It would therefore seem appropriate to introduce this document with a summary of its results. Below, these results are grouped under a number of core headings even if, obviously, most of them are closely related to each other.

2.1 General characteristics of vocational education and training systems

2.1.1 Vocational education and training and socio-economic development

Vocational education and training is generally seen as a tool to fight unemployment and in some cases even as a tool for alleviating poverty. It is also identified as a tool to support privatisation processes taking place in many of the countries - improving the competitiveness of the economy in an international context. For the Mashreq region, the Mediterranean Free Trade Zone which is scheduled to be established in 2010 is important in this respect.

Vocational education and training will not by itself solve socio-economic problems but it does make an important contribution by upgrading people's technical and general skills and competencies and thus increasing overall employability.

2.1.2 Weaknesses of vocational education and training systems

The main weakness identified by respondents from all countries is the apparent failure to create an effective link between their labour markets and vocational education and training systems. Although this is not a problem specific to the region, it was identified as a main theme for the Cairo conference. Other issues raised were the tensions between the vocational education and training and the higher education systems, often related to the status of the former; the lack of proper financing and development of the vocational education and training sector; the lack of qualified teachers and their migration into better paid private sector jobs; and finally, the lack of co-ordination among different actors (different public authorities, schools, employers, social partners, even parents) within the national vocational education and training systems.

2.1.3 Responding to labour market needs

Although defining and implementing effective standards appeared to be widely acknowledged as being the most effective way of strengthening the weak links between vocational education and training and the labour market, standards are not seen as the only tool for improving the relevancy of the vocational education and training sector. Developing standards requires a functioning labour market information system and needs to be

accompanied by related policies, strategies and legislation, by increased participation of social partners and the private sector and by guidance and counselling systems.

2.1.4 Innovative practice

Encouragingly, the feed-back to the questionnaires revealed that there are comprehensive policy reforms taking place in all of the countries concerned. Furthermore, although to a lesser extent, there are promising initiatives aimed at increasing the participation of social partners and employers in vocational education and training development and delivery. Finally, there are some international projects with components related to standards development.

Starting from classifications such as those of the Arab League and the ILO, new occupations are being defined in different countries, if independent from each other, as the demand for these arises. This concerns particularly new technologies.

2.2 Implementation and delivery of vocational education and training

2.2.1 Delivery

The main issue in vocational education and training delivery appeared to be the qualification of trainers and teachers. In general, compulsory standard qualifications are in place but, again, the link with social partners and industry is weak in this area.

The mode of delivery is overwhelmingly traditional, largely taking place in public and private schools and only to a much lesser extent in training centres, through part-time schemes and 'on-the-job' training.

Although much of the training is school-based, there are some experiments with alternative approaches. These include practical training, workshops and education through projects and assignments. Some of these will be discussed later. Open and distance learning is uncommon.

Teaching/learning method	Used	Range (%)
Formal teaching/lecturing by qualified teacher/trainers	6	45 - 80
Practical training and instruction in training workshops	6	10 - 30
Informal teaching including group work within classrooms/training workshops and with a teacher/trainer available for guidance and supervision	3	5 - 10
Team or group projects and assignments, set by the teacher but not necessarily within a classroom environment and without direct teacher/trainer support or supervision	3	3 - 5
Individual projects and assignments, set by the teacher but not necessarily within a classroom environment and without direct teacher/trainer support or supervision	4	3 - 5
Self directed study where the student makes their own choice of topic to study - e.g. in a library or at home	1	

Teaching/learning method	Used	Range (%)
Open and distance learning	1	4
Structured learning in the workplace with support and advice from an experienced worker/supervisor	3	5
Informal learning on the job in the workplace	2	10

Fig.1

2.2.2 Assessment

The assessment systems in place are mostly the sole responsibility of public authorities and not the social partners. Input for assessment activity is usually provided by teachers but some countries employ professional assessors.

2.3 Vocational education and training standards

2.3.1 Development of standards

Throughout the region, *the* question in standards development appears to be who is responsible for which part of the process. In all countries the initiative for developing a new standard originates with the central authorities but the feedback leaves the question of whether this is considered good or bad unanswered. The precise ministry varies from country to country. In all cases employers are consulted in the definition of standards, either through permanent or ad-hoc committees, curriculum development consultations, surveys, etc. Drafting the text of the standard is mostly the responsibility of educational specialists.

Most of the countries test their new standards. Testing can be done in pilot schools or through country-wide but time-limited trial periods. Some countries reported assessing standards in workshops with employers.

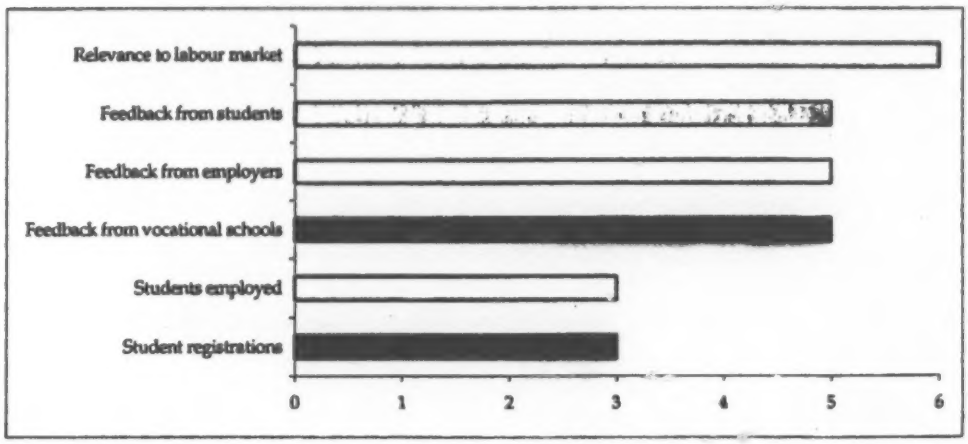

Fig. 2

All countries evaluate their vocational education and training standards and take as main evaluation criterion the relevance of standards to the labour market (See figure 2). Many use feedback from students, schools and employers as their main evaluation input. However, labour market statistics, such as numbers of students employed over or after a certain period of time, are only used in a few countries.

In all countries labour market information is collected through DACUM[2] sessions, questionnaires, job analysis and statistical information. A good and region-wide example of a sector in which labour market information has led to a change of standards is information technology. Vocational education and training and labour market research is normally the jurisdiction of the ministries. In most cases, there are no advanced labour market information systems in place; this will be discussed later in this document. Also in most of the countries, there are no specific research agencies for vocational education and training. Research on the topic is carried out by the ministries concerned.

2.3.2 Content of vocational education and training standards

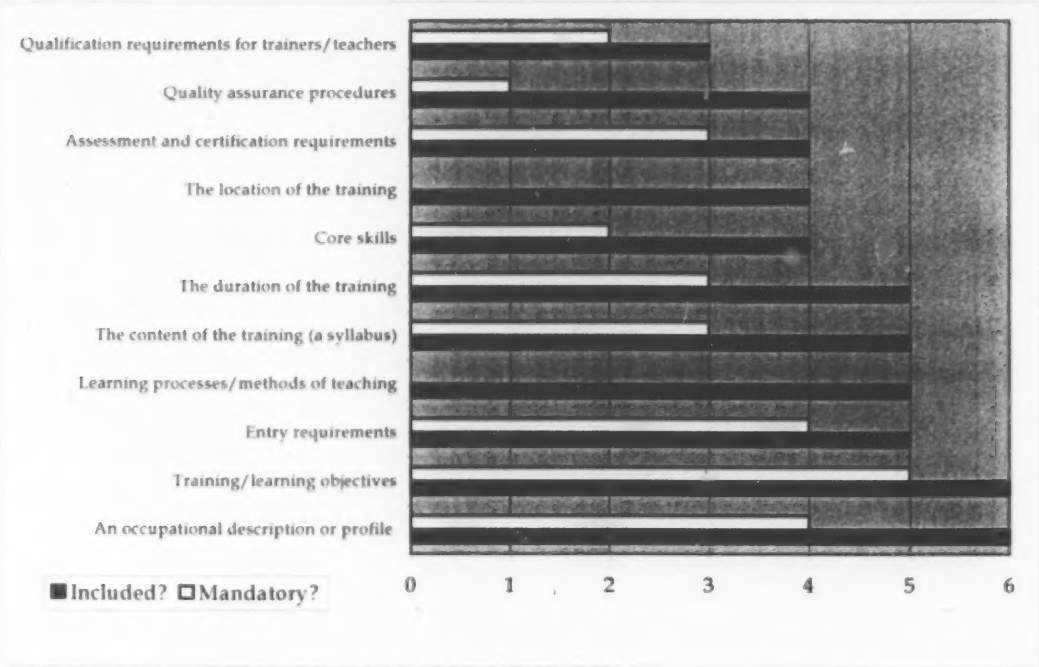

Fig. 3

Figure 3 compares the content of vocational education and training standards currently used in the Mashreq region. As is illustrated, training objectives and occupational profiles form part of vocational education and training standards throughout the region. Their inclusion is not a formal requirement though. In most of the Mashreq countries, standards also describe

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[2] Develop A CurriculUM

the duration of studies, training content, entry requirements, and methods of teaching. Inclusion of the latter is not a formal requirement in any of the countries. Fewer countries define core skills, assessment and certification, and quality assurance procedures in their standards. It is interesting to note that the actual content of standards differs considerably from country to country and that it often exceeds the mandatory elements.

Employers are often (though to a varying extent) involved in the definition of occupational profiles. They are not involved in, for example, defining the teaching qualifications, training objectives and the definition of core skills.

3. CONFERENCE THEMES

3.1 Developing and implementing vocational education and training standards

3.1.1 International consensus

There are no ready-made vocational education and training standards development models which can be applied to any country but there is international agreement on some core elements. Neither the EU nor any of its constituent countries has a universally applicable mechanism for standards development. There is, however, help to be found in international consensus.

The world is witnessing a period of economic change - represented by a number of international trends - which no country can afford to ignore. It is possible to identify changes which are of importance to us all. Mass production systems are in decline. The engines of market development today are the small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Routine, unskilled manual labour is less and less in demand and there is an increasing demand for skilled workers. It is necessary to respond very rapidly to these demands.

Vocational education and training systems around the world show a consistent pattern of change and response to these changes. The first response in most countries has been to develop clear standards which create and maintain a link with employment requirements so that vocational education and training graduates meet the requirements of the world of employment and thus are employable. But there is more. Much broader requirements are being introduced. So are 'core and key skills' - the employment requirements which are non-technical in nature, such as communication and team-working skills.

There also is a move towards flexibility in vocational education and training systems and this often means a move away from a centrally driven school-dominated model. One of the first areas of impact of rapid change has proven to be the curriculum. Large heavy curricula are broken down into small units or modules to allow a more flexible curriculum design (and adaptation) and facilitate the use of small parts in continuing training or other forms of life-long learning.

Finally, there is a trend towards qualitative labour market analysis. Analysing labour market content rather than just counting numbers is a way of keeping abreast of developments in demand and of knowing not only how many professionals of which type are needed over time but also what these professionals are expected to do.

The vocational education and training standard is the bridging mechanism between vocational education and training and the labour market. In it, we can embed all the other response requirements. The standard can be broad so it meets a series of skill needs. It can include the key and core skills. It can be based on a modular design. It can be delivered in a flexible way. But until we have that standard - the specification of what it is that a student will learn and be able to do, the relevance of vocational education and training cannot be guaranteed and its development will be a process without direction.

3.1.2 Content consensus

Countries all over the world use vocational education and training standards and they differ to a great extent. Some are detailed, some are general, but also here there is consensus. There are three elements generally accepted as the core specifications of vocational education and training standards. These are:

- **employment specifications**, sometimes referred to as the occupational standard, detailing what the student needs to be able to do,
- **learning specifications**, sometimes referred to as the training standard, detailing what the student needs to learn, and
- **assessment specifications**, detailing how the acquisition of knowledge and skills is measured.

Comprehensive vocational education and training standards have to include these three elements.

THE COMMON FEATURES		
The question	**The specification which answers the question**	**The key contributors**
What does the student need to be able to do in employment?	The employment specification	Employers Government (ministries of labour, economic planning, education)
What does the student need to learn to be effective in employment?	The learning specification (the curriculum)	Educational professionals Employers (advisory)
How will we know what the student has learned and is able to do in employment?	The assessment specification	Educational professionals Employers

Fig. 4

3.1.3 The changing role of teachers

The group of stakeholders in standards includes all involved in vocational education and training, not just the employers, the social partners and the teachers, but also public authorities, students, parents, labour market officers, student counsellors, etc. It needs to be stressed that standards are not teaching documents, neither are they 'owned' or defined by teachers. This may have been different in the past and the message is still hard to sell in many countries. However, standards defined with broad agreement of all stakeholders in vocational education and training have changed the specification of education from 'What shall we teach' to 'What needs to be learned'. It gives the teacher the task of supporting the learning process, not just controlling the teaching process.

3.1.4 Quality assessment

If an enormous amount of money is spent on developing a vocational education and training system, criteria are needed by which to judge whether these funds are being spent rightly. The main criterion should obviously be that the standards meet the needs of employment. This ought to be done by benchmarking against best practice, not against average or worst practice. If average practice were sufficient, the vocational education and training system wouldn't need to help improve the economy.

The table below summarises some of the quality criteria linked to the design, development and implementation of standards.

QUALITY CRITERIA FOR DESIGN, DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING STANDARDS	
Quality Criteria	**Issues/Dangers**
Meet the needs of employment - benchmarked to best practice	Not all employment practice is 'best practice'
Balances the needs of all stakeholders	An imbalance will alienate stakeholders
Describe broad occupational/professional areas	Too broad = too general and of no immediate use
Include all the components of the skilled worker profile	Integrated into the professional/technical requirements - separation into 'general education' does not work
Incorporate future requirements and international trends	Within the limits of feasibility and local development/economic needs
Offers flexible access and delivery - equality of opportunity	Requirements must still be challenging and significant
Recognises demonstrated competence through qualifications	Too much flexibility leads to lack of coherence
Encourages progression and development	Policy in general education may need to change

Fig. 5

Standards are or ought to be an integral part of a national vocational education and training system in that they are benchmarks of achievement. Without standards to refer to, it is hard to define what needs to be taught at all. Standards form the basis of national vocational qualifications - certified statements of skills and knowledge applied in a vocational context.

3.2 Involving stakeholders

3.2.1 Stakeholders and their reasons to be involved

Core stakeholders in vocational education and training and thus in standards development include national and regional authorities, employers' representatives, trade union representatives, associated training bodies, research and pedagogical institutes, awarding and examination bodies, curriculum councils or the likes as applicable in each country, and teacher training institutes.

There are, however, more stakeholders whose involvement may be less obvious. These include the general and higher education sectors, companies, public and private training institutions, teachers and trainers, students, trainees and employees, and the community at large.

Each group of stakeholders has its own reason to pursue involvement in the development of vocational education and training standards.

Policy makers (economic planners and politicians) need to monitor and strengthen the key link between education, competitiveness and economic and social development, primarily by responding to existing and anticipated skill gaps. Authorities need to anticipate the impact of globalisation on the national economy and the labour force. They also have a responsibility towards the socially vulnerable - combating social exclusion is a not just a local or regional, but also a national concern.

Employers seek to influence the process of steering skill input into the labour market. They want employees with relevant skills for the job - they are the first to be hit when shortage strikes. Their shared ownership is an important endorsement of the standards development process. For employers the bottom line is their need to increase competitiveness in a widening (globalised) market.

Trade unions (and the individuals they represent) also want influence in the process of standards development, though for slightly different reasons. They too have a genuine interest in improving the employability of the work-force, if often from a social rather than a commercial angle. Consequently, their aims include *attractive* employability and incorporating the conditions for personal and career development in the vocational education and training system.

The table below gives a wider overview of stakeholders and their specific stakes in standards.

WHO NEEDS STANDARDS?		
Who is interested in standards?	**Why are they interested in standards?**	**What do they use standards for?**
Employers	This is what I want people to be able to do	• Recruitment and specifications • Job descriptions • Workforce planning • Identifying and meeting training and development needs
Economic planners and politicians	These are the skills that our economy needs to compete	• Strategic manpower plans • Deciding priorities for vocational education and training funding
Vocational education and training planners	This is what people must be able to do when they have completed the vocational education and training programme	• Planning vocational education and training programmes • Allocating resources to vocational education and training programmes

WHO NEEDS STANDARDS?		
Who is interested in standards?	**Why are they interested in standards?**	**What do they use standards for?**
Teachers	These are the skills and knowledge that students must learn	• Curriculum design • Lesson planning • Assessment planning
Career advisers	These are the things that employers expect vocational education and training graduates to be able to do	• Advising school students and adults • Career development plans
Students	This is what I will know and be able to do when I have finished my education and training	• Choosing an appropriate career and vocational education and training programme
Parents	This is what my son/daughter will know and be able to do when they have finished their education and training	• Helping their children choose an appropriate career and vocational education and training programme

Fig. 6

3.2.2 The value of the employment specification

As stated above, vocational education and training standards do not just concern curriculum development. Occupational standards (the employment specifications) can be used for a variety of purposes and when it comes to encouraging stakeholder involvement, this is increasingly their selling point. If appropriately designed, standards can be used for recruitment, selection, job design and evaluation. This makes them powerful tools for both employers and trade unions.

Standards can also be put to good use when analysing the training needs of organisations and individuals and in the subsequent development and evaluation of tailored training programmes.

3.2.3 Balancing the learning specification

Different stakeholders have different priorities and these need to be balanced in the design of a curriculum based on employment specifications.

Policy makers value qualifications that provide knowledge and skills for the immediate and future needs of the national economy. They may also wish to incorporate transferable skills, such as language skills, according to national priorities. Another one of their concerns will be the cost-effectiveness of delivery of education and training.

Employers, on the other hand, typically value qualifications that provide knowledge and skills for specific immediate needs and one of their main concerns is often reliable certification. This already outlines their interest in assessment and evaluation procedures.

Trade unions and the individuals they represent will generally value qualifications that have real currency in national and international job markets, that facilitate entry into immediate employment but also enable learning and career progression. This implies the need for breadth in their design and an emphasis on progression routes

3.2.4 Involving stakeholders

Stakeholders need the infrastructure that allows them to get involved and the establishment of such an infrastructure is therefore crucial. Different organisational models are possible and particularly in this area there are lessons to be learned from countries which have already been through (part of) this process. (Chapter 3.3.9. describes a current infrastructure example from Ireland).

The final design of an infrastructure will be based on the traditions of each individual country, largely because building on existing structures (such as employers federations, industry lead bodies, national training organisations and sector committees) is both advisable and cost-effective.

Within such an infrastructure, functions for each segment need to be firmly defined so that the role of each participating body is clear. **Transparency is the key word here. It needs to be beyond dispute who is responsible for which part of the process.**

3.2.5 Components

Even defining these parts of the process can be a labour intensive task and this needs to be tackled before anything else. Responsibilities need to be assigned before the process of defining vocational education and training standards is started. Responsibilities include those for:

- funding and overall co-ordination
- stakeholder networking, not just for the actual development process but also as a sounding board
- marketing and promotion of agreed standards, often forgotten but ever so important
- development of occupational standards (the employment specification)
- qualifications design (learning specification)
- assessment and certification strategy (assessment specification)
- quality assurance to ensure consistency of design, delivery and assessment
- data collection and management
- national monitoring

3.2.6 The role of sectoral stakeholders

Sectoral stakeholders have a critical role to play in the analysis and mapping of the needs of their respective sectors. They can develop standards and qualifications, based on a nationally

agreed design template, and recommend feasible assessment procedures and quality assurance of these. However, someone needs to be responsible for regulating and approving standards developed by many sectors. The issue of who should be assigned this task is resolved differently in different countries. In some cases it is a government department. In others it is employers' bodies. In others again a national qualifications authority, established for the purpose and often an agency of the national authorities, is responsible for co-ordinating all sectoral development.

Lessons learnt

1. logistics for vocational education and training standards development

It is important to appreciate the tremendous national will and stakeholder commitment required, not only to put the process of standards development in motion but also to keep the machine running. It is also an expensive exercise and since it ought to be an on-going process, finding sustainable funding is imperative. Marketing and promotion, already mentioned above, are often overlooked parts of the process. A sense of ownership among all actors involved is crucial. Investment in marketing and promotion is therefore to be treated as an essential part of the standards development process. Finally, in terms of human resources, there is a huge job to be done in training those involved - and not only those at authority level.

2. design and development of vocational education and training standards

Standards development is a time consuming exercise. Priorities therefore need to be defined in terms of sectors and skill levels. Sectors with an urgent and shifting demand may be tackled first. Perhaps the most crucial lesson learnt in many countries is to agree on common design rules for national standards. If these can be agreed on *by all stakeholders*, within a country or perhaps even within a wider region, much time and money will be saved afterwards, not only because a duplication of efforts is avoided but also because standards across different sectors (and countries) can be understood and interpreted without additional explanation and documentation.

Finally, also for transparency reasons, simple and clear language should be used to write standards. Skills should be defined in a generic rather than highly specialised way, e.g. 'English language', not 'English for hotel receptionists'.

Standards should be meaningful, assessable, and worthy of national certification.

3.3 Linking vocational education and training standards to the labour market

3.3.1 Labour market information systems

Employment specifications must reflect ongoing economic and technical changes in the economy that result in changing skill demands in the labour force. Before embarking on the development of standards, we need labour market information to provide 'early warnings' and identify those occupations which:

- are in high demand, making them a high priority for standard development;
- are changing rapidly and will therefore need frequent updating;
- represent a large percentage of the workforce and require specialised skills for their performance; and
- are in new emerging fields of work, such as information and communication technologies.

Analysis of labour market information provides a starting point for more in-depth occupational analysis. Standards developers do not normally get directly involved in starting and implementing education and training programmes. They do not therefore need labour market information for the same reason as education and training institutions. Standards developers do not normally develop first generation labour market information. Instead, they typically synthesise labour market information that is available from multiple sources to meet their needs.

The following paragraphs summarise different types of labour market information and indicate issues related to the use of each of these. Standards developers should combine information from multiple sources to produce the best possible analysis. In developing economies, special attention needs to be paid to monitoring developments in small and medium enterprises and the informal sector.

3.3.2 International and national economic trends

While not giving specific signals in one particular country for individual sectors and/or occupations, economic trends can provide early warning signals of future trends in demand for clusters of occupations and for changes in the content of these occupations. Common threads in existing reports include:

- the globalisation of trade;
- changes in the workplace and organisational culture;
- changes in marketing and customer requirements;
- regulations which affect health and safety, finance, and environmental issues; and,
- the increasing impact of technology and telecommunications.

All of these affect the content of employment and training specifications. Developing countries are affected by global changes, particularly when there is inward investment from multinationals and when they wish to compete in world-wide markets.

3.3.3 National enterprise employment data

Most countries maintain, at least for the formal sector, employment figures on registered enterprises. These are normally regularly updated for tax purposes. This type of data does not usually give detailed occupational employment figures but may provide a synopsis for managerial, skilled and unskilled employment. Such data can give signals about changes in overall sectoral employment, which can be translated into employment in selected occupations if the occupational structure of a sector is known. A number of countries maintain comparative tables of employment by sector. Standards developers can use these to determine the impact on specific occupations of rapid changes in overall sectoral employment. An issue with this type of data, particularly for developing countries, is that it may not accurately reflect total employment because of large informal and black market activity. This is a particular problem in SMEs, which in most countries makes up the bulk of employment.

3.3.4 Sector surveys

Some countries carry out sector surveys, including surveys in selected regions of the country. These may contain more detailed employment data and include occupational categories. They may provide additional information on types of investment, particularly in technology, that have a direct impact on occupational standards. Some countries also attempt to obtain forecasts of future employment demand by asking employers to provide the information for these sector surveys. However, research has largely discredited this approach to forecasting labour demand, as employers have not demonstrated that they can accurately forecast occupational demand other than in the short term (i.e. 3-6 months).

3.3.5 Census, social security, and household survey data

Most census databanks carry occupational information. The problems with these data are that they are often old (only replicated about every 10 years) and that people are self-reporting their occupations. Even trends between surveys need to be treated with caution, because of the long time-lapse between surveys. Social security data may provide occupational trend data but in developing countries the majority of people may live and work in the informal sector and the data may not include them. Finally, many countries, including middle income countries, conduct regular household surveys. These often provide a wealth of employment and unemployment data, which may give some signals for standards development. These surveys do suffer from the same self-reporting problem as census data, but not from the informal/formal data problem of social security systems because the surveys are based on household samples.

3.3.6 Medium-term employment forecasts

There are methods to getting some short-term (i.e. 3-6 month) forecast information. The technique involves selecting a sample of small, medium, and large enterprises and conducting on-site interviews to obtain general qualitative trends. Due to the rapid ageing of information, immediate reporting of the information and regularly repeating the exercise are critical to this technique. The approach provides qualitative information on the labour market and economic development trends. Many countries (such as Sweden, the UK and the USA but also Hungary, Turkey and Poland) use these surveys. If these surveys are done on a regular basis they can provide some longer-term data on trends, which can be useful in setting standards development priorities. This approach is of particular interest in developing countries, which have rapidly changing economic conditions but lack the other types of statistical systems. The Swedish approach has been adapted in a number of countries, and repetitive applications have proven quite successful in Hungary. A related technique, developed by the ILO is the 'key informant system'. This technique is intended for use in less-developed countries with high levels of informal employment in traditional cultures.

3.3.7 Employment service 'Job Bank' data

In countries that operate a public employment service, standards organisations have access to job vacancy data and job seeker data. Such statistics are often among the most readily available sources of labour market information in middle income countries and they are often used as an indicator of immediate labour market demand and supply. However, there are several concerns about its validity. First, in countries where there is a large informal economy the job vacancy information may represent only a very small portion of the actual demand. Secondly, formal registration of job seekers and job orders is normally voluntary, and as such there may be a large under-count of demand and supply. Thirdly, even in highly developed countries only about 25 per cent of job vacancies get listed and these are often in low and semi-skilled occupations. Fourthly, job vacancies may not really be new openings as such. They may just represent continuing and rapid turnover in unattractive occupations (i.e., low wages, poor working conditions). In summary, Job Bank data need to be used with caution and in combination with other labour market information when used for the purpose of setting standards development priorities.

3.3.8 Advisory committees

(Employer) advisory groups, sometimes referred to as focus groups, are often used to obtain labour market information. Three levels of committees are used: (a) national multi-sector tripartite committees to spot general trends, (b) sector-specific committees to give more focused input, and (c) occupation-specific committees to give very direct input on a selected occupational family. These committees can provide useful information and can help interpret information from other sources. It must be remembered, however, that the information obtained through advisory committees may subject to bias from individual committee members. It needs to be integrated carefully into the overall analysis.

3.3.9 Occupational employment surveys and long-term forecasting

There are methods of forecasting long term demand (i.e. 5-10 years) and overcome the problem of inaccurate employer forecasts. Few developing countries have the necessary data systems but it is useful to mention the technique, which is used in several developed countries (i.e. the US Occupational Employment Statistics Program - OES). The technique includes collecting samples of employment in enterprises, by sector, on a rotating basis about every three years. This produces a profile of employment by occupation and by sector. Employment by occupation in the total sector can be extrapolated by using employment data generated from national employment files. Growth, or decline, in overall employment in the sector is then forecasted by a multiple linear regression technique using variables that have proven to significantly affect employment in the sector (i.e. financial interest rates affect construction). If the overall employment in the sector increases, employment in each occupation in the sector will increase proportionately. Information on withdrawals of labour from the sector, due to death and retirement, are developed from life insurance actuarial tables, which provide quite accurate data by occupation. This data is combined with the overall growth (or decline) figures to give a net result by sector and occupation. These techniques can rapidly respond to changing economic conditions as the sector data can be quickly recalculated. Once the data has been calculated for each sector, the data can be combined for all sectors to provide an overall view of occupational growth or decline for an occupation across all sectors.

3.3.10 Linking vocational education and training standards to the labour market - the example of Ireland

Ireland became a member of the European Union together with Denmark in 1973. Its efforts to achieve growth and employment rates which match average EU levels have been much used as a case study in transition countries. The Business, Education and Training Partnership initiative of 1997 is described below as a practical example of successfully linking vocational education and training to the labour market and involving social partners actively in the process.

In the late 1990s, following a period of very rapid economic growth, Ireland was facing dramatic skill shortages. Pressure from employers on the government mounted and led to the launch of the Business, Education and Training Partnership initiative in 1997. The initiative constitutes a comprehensive national model for formalising the process of manpower forecasting and responding to skill needs through targeted education and training activities. Three key ministries are involved. The Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Enterprise, Trade and Employment are active throughout the process. Critically, however, in the final phase where words are put into action, the Ministry of Finance joins the discussions too.

The initiative is borne by three core bodies, two of which are advisory, the other executive.

An expert group on future skills identifies, in a systematic way, the skill needs of different sectors and advises on the actions needed to address them. It is also responsible for developing labour demand forecasting systems. Finally, it discusses and advises on strategic issues and awareness raising campaigns aimed at both government and job-seekers.

The Business, Education and Training Partnership Forum has representatives from the highest levels of the Irish business, education and training communities, as well as from the two ministries and development agencies. Its main task is reviewing opinions from the Expert Group, turning advice into proposals, and carrying these forward. The Forum gauges the response from the education and business communities to new ideas and generally aims at stimulating and speeding up the debate among the business sector on the one hand and the education and training sector on the other.

Finally, the Management Implementation Group considers the results of the work carried out by the Expert Group and the Forum and the proposals brought forward and works to implement the most appropriate proposals as quickly as possible. The Management Implementation Group is made up of top civil servants from the two ministries and the Ministry of Finance, and top executives from the higher education authority and employment and training agencies.

Throughout the process, the key word is speed and the initial results have been promising. The first economic sector that was analysed was, unsurprisingly, the IT sector. Well-received recommendations made on the basis of 74 different individual surveys carried out within a four year period resulted in large scale action within 15 months. At that moment the government announced support for thousands of extra places to be created at all (post-secondary) level education establishments, including conversion courses at post-graduate level and representing an investment of some €100M.

Lessons learnt

Key factors influencing the outcome of a nation-wide effort to link training standards to the labour market.

- the commitment of authorities to activate and engage fully in the process,
- the high level of participation by social partners, government ministries and education and training agencies,
- the quality of the labour market information used,
- the capacity to analyse labour market information and trends,
- the response time to implement changes,
- the availability of resources.

4. NATIONAL CASE STUDIES FROM MASHREQ COUNTRIES

The **PNA representatives** presented an overview of the recently started comprehensive reform of their vocational education and training system, making special reference to the delicate political situation in which they have to operate. In the last thirty years, curricula were imported from Jordan without any significant adaptations to the rather specific Palestinian reality. Five years ago, the process of adaptation of these curricula was finally begun. Much emphasis was put on providing training for specific groups, such as the new civil service, ex-detainees, etc. Training of trainers was not overlooked as an issue of key importance. The most significant problem is the diffuse nature of its labour market. A large part of the population of the West Bank and Gaza Strip work in a foreign labour market, the frills of which may be even harder to forecast than those of a home market.

The **Lebanese** delegation reported on its efforts to modularise its technical and vocational education and training curricula. Although attempts to implement new modules in 1988 failed, they sowed the seed of a new way of thinking which took a decade to mature. Recently, the process of introducing modular education was picked up again, this time facing a more receptive audience. Today, vocational education and training in Lebanon is divided into two main streams: technical education and vocational training. The full modularisation of the latter is due to be completed by the end of 2001. Referring to both the informal labour market and international labour mobility, the Lebanese case study also reported difficulties encountered on the issue of 'which labour market to aim reforms at'.

Syria concentrated its presentation on the efforts currently being made to introduce a ccoperative school and company-based training system that will increase the role of employers in the definition and delivery of vocational education and training. The process was launched only very recently and is being supported by the Foundation.

The **Jordanian** delegation presented the progress of the Human Resources Development Information Services (HRDIS), a project through which a new labour market information system will be introduced alongside a new occupational classification. This US$2.2 million project was launched at the start of 2001 and aims at strengthening the logistical demands of the knowledge-based society. In contrast with many other countries in the region, an important role is reserved for automated processes. Web-based job matching (Electronic Labour Exchange), a business database, and labour market information services are under development. Strengthening career counselling services and training career counsellors is also provided for.

A second Jordanian presentation outlined the work of the Vocational Training Corporation, a semi-autonomous, tripartite organisation delivering vocational training at 39 training centres throughout Jordan.

The **Egyptian** delegation presented two current initiatives: the National Skills Standards Project and the Mubarak-Kohl Initiative. Both projects aim to overcome the lack of clear standards for vocational education and training combined with low social partner involvement.

The Mubarak-Kohl Initiative is a programme through which a dual system, based on the German model, has been experimented with through a pilot programme in three Egyptian cities. The project started in 1995 and results have not been limited to local pilot activities. Their success and particularly their acceptance by all stakeholders has sparked a process of review of different functions in the Egyptian vocational education and training system.

Operating in parallel is the National Skills Standards Project - a large scale reform of the Egyptian vocational education and training system. Through the project, new competency-based modular training programmes, benchmarked to European standards, are being introduced to 100 occupations. These will be delivered initially in some 50 private and public training centres. The main partners in this project are the Egyptian government and federations and chambers for tourism, industry and construction. The project started in 1999 while a two-year period of piloting training programmes will commence in January 2002.

5. WORKING GROUP RESULTS: THE REGIONAL DIMENSION

While the plenary sessions aimed at deepening participants' knowledge of the two key themes of the conference (Chapter 3) and the four round table sessions (Chapter 4) illustrated different national practice and solutions in the region and some EU countries, three Working Group sessions allowed for in-depth discussion of the issues that were presented during these sessions from a regional perspective. All partner countries were represented in each working group.

The Working Groups were sent off with three questions which will be treated separately here.

5.1 Weaknesses

As far as the development of vocational education and training standards is concerned, what weaknesses have been identified in the region and what examples are there from which we can learn?

- A major problem which all groups agreed on were the **general weakness of labour market information systems in the region.** This applies both to systems analysing and mapping current needs and systems forecasting future demand. It was, however, commented that this is not just due to the absence of institutions supporting the gathering and analysis of data but also because the labour market in the region is less tangible than it is in many EU countries, mostly because of the prevalence of informal labour. Another reason for the weakness of existing information systems mentioned was confidentiality and sometimes partiality of existing or circulated data.
- Another significant problem reported by all groups is the **limited involvement and sometimes even limited organisation of social partners.**
- There seems to be a considerable **discrepancy** in some of the countries between **national, regional and even local demands**. The problems caused by this are in some instances exacerbated by insufficient co-ordination among local and national authorities and among responsible institutions. Of the latter there often appear to be too many. In other words, it is often unclear who precisely is responsible for what.
- In relation to foreign assistance, one group commented that **inadequate donor co-operation** sometimes had a detrimental effect.
- Another issue which frequently cropped up was that of **teacher training**. Needs assessment should be carried out as much for trainers as for any other profession. Many trainers require additional training themselves to be better able to respond to their own needs. It would be unfair to think in terms of retraining for the majority of the labour force while trainers, whose task is changing tremendously, are left to their own devices when it comes to skills upgrading.
- **Resources and institutional and legal frameworks** were unanimously brought up as areas which need attention if they are to support the development of vocational education and training standards.

- Finally, a **closer integration of the three standards specifications** (employment, training and assessment) needs to be worked towards. In the context of the working groups, linking assessment to occupational and training standards to increase the credibility of these standards was discussed in different groups. The need to increase employer involvement in assessment procedures was highlighted frequently throughout the conference.

5.2 Key themes

As far as the increasing the relevance of vocational education and training standards to labour market needs is concerned, what are the key themes?

From the above the main themes identified are:

- stakeholder involvement, and in **particular social partner involvement and capacity building,**
- **labour market analysis and needs assessment,**
- **institutional (and legal) development,**
- **teachers' and trainers' training**
- **funding models** for standards development

Perhaps precisely the lack of discussion of it might suggest that another main theme which requires attention is that of **core skills (or broad-based skills) versus specialised skills**. One group discussed this topic which has been at the centre of debate in many EU countries for some years now and is very closely linked to the issue of standards development.

In addition, **standards development methodology** was an issue identified. As this has been well covered by the plenary sessions of the conference and the European Training Foundation manuals it is discussed elsewhere in this document.

One group debated the need for a reassessment of the **relationship between the vocational education and training and higher education systems**.

Assessment was also identified as a key issue, yet at the same time as an underdeveloped area. It was noted that assessments should be linked to occupational and training standards if they are to have credibility. This may require centralisation of the development of examinations and other forms of assessment. Increased employer involvement in assessment of students was also recommended by one of the groups.

A set of useful recommendations under the heading: ***Trends and Suggested Ideas*** came from one of the working groups. A useful, if brainstormed and as such unelaborated, collection of possible innovations, it is presented here because it represents many of the themes from the margins of the core topic of the conference which were nevertheless repeatedly brought to the fore. The list included:

- increasing openness among stakeholders in vocational education and training and its management

- encouraging private schools to compete and deliver vocational education and training
- moving the responsibility of training and employment specifications to an organisation of stakeholders independent from government
- encouraging employer participation through tax reductions
- rewarding training institutions that use standards, through funding or accreditation

5.3 Regional co-operation

What is the scope for developing a regional (multi-country) approach to standards development?

Positively, as also described in the next chapter, there was a generally encouraging response to calls for increased regional collaboration. Concrete proposals included:

- identifying a common template and perhaps methodologies for employment specifications;
- identifying a common definition of core skills;
- benchmarking standards in the region;
- sharing visits between countries and exchanging examples of good practice to keep abreast of developments in the region;
- encouraging twinning arrangements with schools in and outside the region;
- exchanging employment specifications between countries;
- exchanging teaching and learning materials;
- developing reciprocal training agreements, using standards as the base for granting credit;
- encouraging donor co-ordination in projects which include a component through which (employment, training or assessment) specifications are developed;
- the development of a regional databank of assessment procedures and standards.

In all cases it was suggested that use of existing channels, such as the Arab League and the Arab Labour Organisation, was preferable over establishing new regional institutions.

5.4 Common understanding

In all working groups, some time was also spent on the issue of common understanding of terminology, definitions and basic principles. This topic is referred to in the opening chapter of this document (comments from the working groups have been incorporated there) and of course in the Foundation's *International Manual*, also discussed above.

6. RESULTS FROM THE NATIONAL DISCUSSION GROUPS

A new feature of the conference was a session which allowed for discussion in national groups. On the last day, all partner country representatives were sent off with their national delegations to enjoy an hour's worth of critique of the meeting in their mother tongues.

In their reporting session, the country teams provided a comprehensive summary of the main points covered and defined the core recommendations for future steps to be taken.

They were asked four concrete questions:

6.1 Opportunities

What opportunities has the conference offered?

All country teams reported back honest and open reflections. Breaking the ice, the Egyptian team noted that it had appreciated the meeting as an opportunity to exchange ideas and learn from other experiences whilst important steps had been made towards developing a common understanding of the issues concerned among participants. Other countries fully agreed, with the Jordanian delegation adding that the conference had served as an external validation of some of their current activities.

6.2 Barriers

What are the main barriers you face in your country?

The list of barriers hampering the development of relevant and effective standards included in *all* cases the **underdeveloped relationship between the public and private sectors**. Given that education is largely within the domain of the public authorities while a large and increasing share of the employment opportunities are in the private sector, this is a serious issue which urgently needs addressing.

Another barrier which reappeared in *each* country report was **the lack of comprehensive and up-to-date labour market information systems**. Existing monitoring systems are ineffective because the bulk of the labour market is made up of SMEs and a huge and notoriously **difficult to monitor informal sector**. Labour market information systems are quite justly seen as a basic tool for economic and social planning. Their absence often leads to supply-driven education and training provision and their development must therefore be singled out as a key priority.

Finally various country representative reported **a lack of resources, insufficient co-operation among different actors** (even within the public sector alone) and the resulting ad-hoc nature of reform initiatives.

6.3 Steps to be taken

What steps can be taken at national level to overcome these barriers?

Steps to be taken at the national level to overcome these barriers followed the pitfalls reported. Urgent appeals were issued to **strengthen the institutional and legal base** for reform activities in the countries. **Capacity building** was a key phrase in *all* accounts. The Syrian and Palestinian delegations underlined the need to **strengthen social partnership**.

The Egyptian delegation recommended establishing training funds to finance system modernisation. Funding and the need for resources to develop occupational, training and assessment standards are perceived as a bit of a chicken-and-egg-story. A responsive training system is a prerequisite for economic growth and thus increased access to funds. However, costly standards and labour market information systems are needed to develop such a training system. Properly managed training funds have proved to be useful tools for generating earmarked funding in other Foundation partner countries.

6.4 Regional co-operation

What possibilities are there for further regional co-operation?

Encouragingly, there were many realistic and attainable suggestions for areas of increased regional collaboration. The Lebanese team, for example, noted that it had recognised many of the problems encountered in the other countries and that this should be interpreted as a call for reinforcing regional collaboration.

Recognising the benefits of developing mutually intelligible standards, the Egyptian and Syrian teams both mentioned the Arab League as a possible platform for the definition of these. The Jordanian delegation proposed improving the links between these regional institutions and other international agencies.

The Lebanese team made a laudable appeal for the dissemination of relevant project results throughout the region. As projects take off, all countries will benefit from being updated regularly about their progress.

The Palestinian delegation called for the organisation of more regular regional meetings, organised from within the region and not necessarily always including donor representations.

7. SUMMARY OF MAIN CONCLUSIONS

This summary is a series of comments identifying the key themes which emerged over the three days of the conference. More detail can be found in the conclusions of the working groups and national groups (Chapters 5 and 6 above)

7.1 Towards competence-based vocational education and training systems

The move towards **competence-based systems** for vocational education and training was a consistent theme throughout the conference. Most of the recent changes discussed by the national groups emphasised this trend, as did the plenary presentations from international partners and the round table discussions.

An important issue to note is that **this trend affects both the development of vocational education and training standards and the process of assessment**.

The trend towards the **description of 'outcomes'** was another key conference theme. Many of the new approaches to the analysis of occupations and the definition of standards describe the results of work activity (outcomes) rather than the tasks and skills which people perform.

7.2 Labour market analysis

Features of recent reforms in Europe, Central Asia and the Mediterranean regions include the strengthening of the processes of **labour market trends analysis**. Processes of analysis now include more 'qualitative' approaches which seek to identify critical future trends in the labour market, both locally and internationally. In labour market analysis the identification of the changing content of occupations is increasingly important as a supplement to the more conventional quantitative forecasting of labour market needs.

In the design of vocational education and training standards that reflect labour market needs, new approaches are being developed that replace the previous 'task-based' systems of occupational analysis, which were designed to reflect the realities of mass production systems with strictly controlled hierarchies and minimal work tasks. In keeping with the trend towards broader occupational profiles and the importance of 'non-technical' core and key skills, analysis systems such as DACUM and Functional Analysis are increasingly used to describe work roles in a broader and more holistic manner.

7.3 Involving stakeholders

The conference repeatedly drew attention to the importance of **involving legitimate stakeholder interests which include employers, employees, economic planners, vocational education and training planners and educationalists, students and their parents.** The social partnership approach, which is typical of EU practice, is now rapidly gaining currency within the Mashreq states.

A desire for co-operation was also evident in round tables and national discussion groups. A number of countries are investing in the development of standards and many expressed the wish that such experiences - and even materials - could be shared.

7.4 Relevance

Vocational education and training systems need to be relevant to the existing and emerging needs of employment. For standards, this means that they must be developed to link with employment requirements, they must meet both current and future needs and they must be developed before the related educational programmes are defined. In relation to this, it was mentioned that employment requirements are not synonymous simply to the needs of individual employers. Social and macroeconomic factors must also be taken into account.

For the vocational education and training system as a whole, it is essential that the needs of SMEs are recognised, and that account is taken of the informal economy. The vocational education and training system also has to embrace the principle of lifelong learning. Attention should not just be confined to initial and school-based training. Participation of adult learners and the importance of continuous updating of skills mean that new and innovative approaches to vocational education and training design and delivery need to be considered.

Finally, **vocational education and training systems and reforms need to be sensitive to local requirements and possibilities.** Importing systems from advanced industrial countries may be quite inappropriate for developing economies, which need sustainable systems that meet local needs whilst recognising international trends.

The conference was also repeatedly reminded that the **impact of an effective vocational education and training system is of a social *as well as* an economic nature.** Unemployment is not just bad for the economy, it saps the motivation and self-esteem of people. Vocational education and training is a vehicle for social as well as economic regeneration.

7.5 Financing

The proper use of financial resources is an issue for all economies. No economy, however advanced, has an unlimited budget to spend on training. However, the conference recognised the distinct difference between developed and developing economies and the constraints caused by lack of resources.

Where resources are scarce, priorities must be established, choosing significant and strategically important occupations as the focus for development. It is equally important that resources are used to best effect and not wasted. Money spent on expensive machinery and equipment is wasted if teachers are not trained to operate it properly.

7.6 Teacher training

The issue of teacher training is often overlooked. **A revision of almost any part of the education system requires a revision of the role of teachers and in many cases in-service**

training of some sort. Within the context of a trend towards lifelong learning, teachers need to be prepared for their new roles, less as communicators of narrowly defined occupational skills, more as guides or even counsellors with an affinity for the volatility of the labour market, themselves continuing to learn and ready to adapt constantly.

7.7 Regional co-operation

A strong case can be made for increased regional collaboration in the development of mutually intelligible standards. The benefits of these were widely acknowledged and several existing institutions were mentioned as possible platforms for such co-operation. (See Chapter 5). Regional dissemination of the results of projects in the field of standards is also recommended.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1 - CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Innovative practices in vocational education and training standards in the Mashreq region

Cairo, Egypt, 7-9 April 2001

Saturday, 7 April

8:00	Registration of participants
Chairperson	Hussein El Gammal, Managing Director, Social Fund for Development (SFD), Egypt
9:00-10:15	**Opening remarks** • Hussein El Gammal, Managing Director, SFD, Egypt • Vittorio Ghidi, Acting Head, European Commission Delegation in Cairo • Ulrich Hillenkamp, Deputy Director, European Training Foundation
10:15-11:00	*Coffee break*
11:00-11:45	**Introductory session,** Eva Jimeno Sicilia and Elena Carrero, European Training Foundation • Objectives and structure of the seminar • Results of comparative study on standards in the six countries of the Mashreq region • Questions and debate
11:45-12:45	**Theme 1: Methodology for developing and implementing vocational education and training standards,** Bob Mansfield, European Training Foundation expert and Moira McKerracher, International Project Manager, Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA), UK • The three essential components • Involving the social partners and other stakeholders. Rationale, motivation and methods • Quality criteria for the design, development and implementation of vocational education and training standards
12:45-13:00	**Organisation of round tables**
13:00-14:30	*Lunch*
14:30-15:45	**Parallel round tables: national case studies from EU and Mashreq countries in developing vocational education and training standards** *Round Table 1 – Chairperson: Ulrich Hillenkamp, European Training Foundation* • Ziad Jweiles, Director General of Technical Education, Ministry of Higher Education, PNA • Nabil Naccache, Director, Technical Industrial Institute, Ministry of Education and Higher Education, Lebanon *Round Table 2 – Chairperson: Ali Sayed, MKI, Egypt*

- Hatem al Homsi, Deputy Minister for Vocational Education and Training, Ministry of Education, Syria
- Gisela Dybowski, Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (BIBB), Germany

15:45-16:15 Coffee break

16:15-17:30 **Parallel round tables: second session**

19:15 *Official dinner*

Sunday, 8 April

Chairperson Ulrich Hillenkamp, Deputy Director, European Training Foundation

9:00-10:00 **Theme 2: Linking vocational education and training standards to the labour market**, David Fretwell, Senior Expert, European Training Foundation/WB and Martin Dodd, FAS International Consulting, Ireland

- Identifying needs - the "content" of occupations
- Anticipation and identification of needs
- Mechanisms for involving social partners

10:00-11:15 **Parallel round tables: national case studies from EU and Mashreq countries in linking vocational education and training standards to labour market**

Round table 1 - Chairperson: Eva Jimeno Sicilia, European Training Foundation

- Tayseer Al Nahar, Vice President, National Centre for Human Resources Development (NCHRD) and Abdel Rahim Abdel Jaber, Assistant Director General for Technical Affairs, Vocational Training Corporation (VTC), Jordan
- Karl-Axel Skjolstrup, Aalborg Technical College, Denmark

Round table 2 - Chairerson: Elena Carrero, European Training Foundation

- Ali Sayed, Head of Programme Implementation Unit, Mubarak Kohl Initiative (PIU/MKI), Ministry of Education and Mohamed Fouad El Fateh Moussa, Director of Human Resource Development Programme, SFD, Egypt
- Philippe Mehaut, Deputy Director, Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches sur les Qualifications (CEREQ), France

11:15-11:45 *Coffee break*

11:45-13:00 Parallel round tables: second session

13:00-14:30 *Lunch*

14:30-15:30 **International experience in development of vocational education and training standards: ILO, World Bank and European Training Foundation**

- Abdelaziz Boutaleb, Senior Specialist Human Resources Development, ILO, Multi-disciplinary team for North Africa
- David Fretwell, Principle Employment and Training Specialist, World Bank
- Ulrich Hillenkamp, Deputy Director, European Training Foundation

15:30-15:40 **Organisation of working groups**

15:40-16:00	Coffee break
16:00-18:00	**Working groups**: Vocational education and training standards in the Med region: specificities, constraints and priorities
	Working group 1
	Chair: Mohamad Fouad El Fateh Moussa, SFD, Egypt
	Rapporteurs: Nabil Naccache, TII, Lebanon and Abdel Rahim Abdel Jaber, VTC, Jordan
	Facilitator: David Fretwell, European Training Foundation
	Working group 2
	Chair: Hisham Kuhail, Deputy Minister of Higher Education, PNA
	Rapporteurs: Elena Carrero, European Training Foundation and Ali Sayed, PIU/MKI, Egypt
	Facilitator: Martin Dodd, FAS, Ireland
	Working group 3
	Chair: Munther Masri, NCHRD, Jordan
	Rapporteurs: Eva Jimeno, European Training Foundation and S. Hamdi Alzaroo, Ministry of Labour, PNA
	Facilitator: Moira McKerracher, SQA

Monday, 9 April

Chairperson	Ulrich Hillenkamp, Deputy Director, European Training Foundation
8:30-9:30	**Feedback from working groups**
9:30-9:45	**Organisation of discussion in national groups**
9:45-10:45	**Relevance in the national context and practical implications: discussion in national groups**
10:45-11:15	*Coffee break*
11:15-12:15	**Feedback from discussion in national groups**
12:15-12:45	**Summary conclusions**, Bob Mansfield, European Training Foundation expert
12:45-13:15	**Closing remarks** • Hussein El Gammal, Managing Director, SFD, Egypt • Vittorio Ghidi, Acting Head, European Commission Delegation in Cairo • Ulrich Hillenkamp, Deputy Director, European Training Foundation
13:15-15.00	*Cocktail*

Innovative practices in vocational education and training standards in the Mashreq region

Cairo, Egypt - 7-9 April 2001

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Bob MANSFIELD
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ANNEX 3 - LIST OF INTERVENTIONS

Innovative practices in vocational education and training standards in the Mashreq region

Cairo, Egypt, 7-9 April 2001

(can be downloaded from http://www.etf.eu.int/etfweb.nsf/pages/medaevents)

Introductory session, Eva Jimeno Sicilia, Elena Carrero
Theme 1: Methodology for developing and implementing vocational education and training standards • Developing and implementing VET standards, Bob Mansfield • Involving the social partners and other stakeholders, Moira McKerracher
National case studies from EU and Mashreq countries in developing vocational education and training standards • National case study PNA, Mazen Hashweh, Muhanned Al-Tull • National case study Syria, Hatem al Homsi • National case study Lebanon, Nabil Naccache • National case study Germany, Gisela Dybowski
Theme 2: Linking vocational education and training standards to the labour market, Martin Dodd
National case studies from EU and Mashreq countries in linking vocational education and training standards to labour market • National case study Jordan, Tayseer Al Nahar, Abdel Rahim Abdel Jaber • National case study Denmark, Karl-Axel Skjolstrup • National case study Egypt, Ali Sayed, Mohamed Fouad El Fateh Moussa
International experience in development of vocational education and training standards: ILO, World Bank and European Training Foundation • International experience - ILO, Abdelaziz Boutaleb • International experience - World Bank, David Fretwell
Working groups: Vocational education and training standards in the Med region: specificities, constraints and priorities • Feedback from Working group 1 • Feedback from Working group 2 • Feedback from Working group 3
Relevance in the national context and practical implications: discussion in national groups • Feedback from National group Syria • Feedback from National group Jordan • Feedback from National group PNA • Feedback from National group Egypt
Summary conclusions, Bob Mansfield